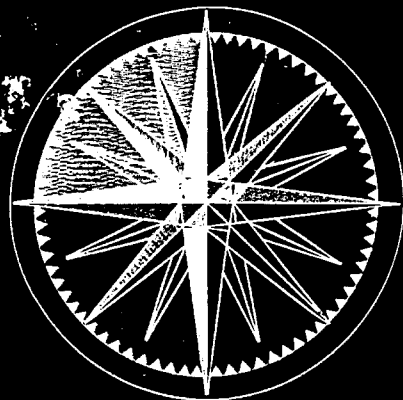


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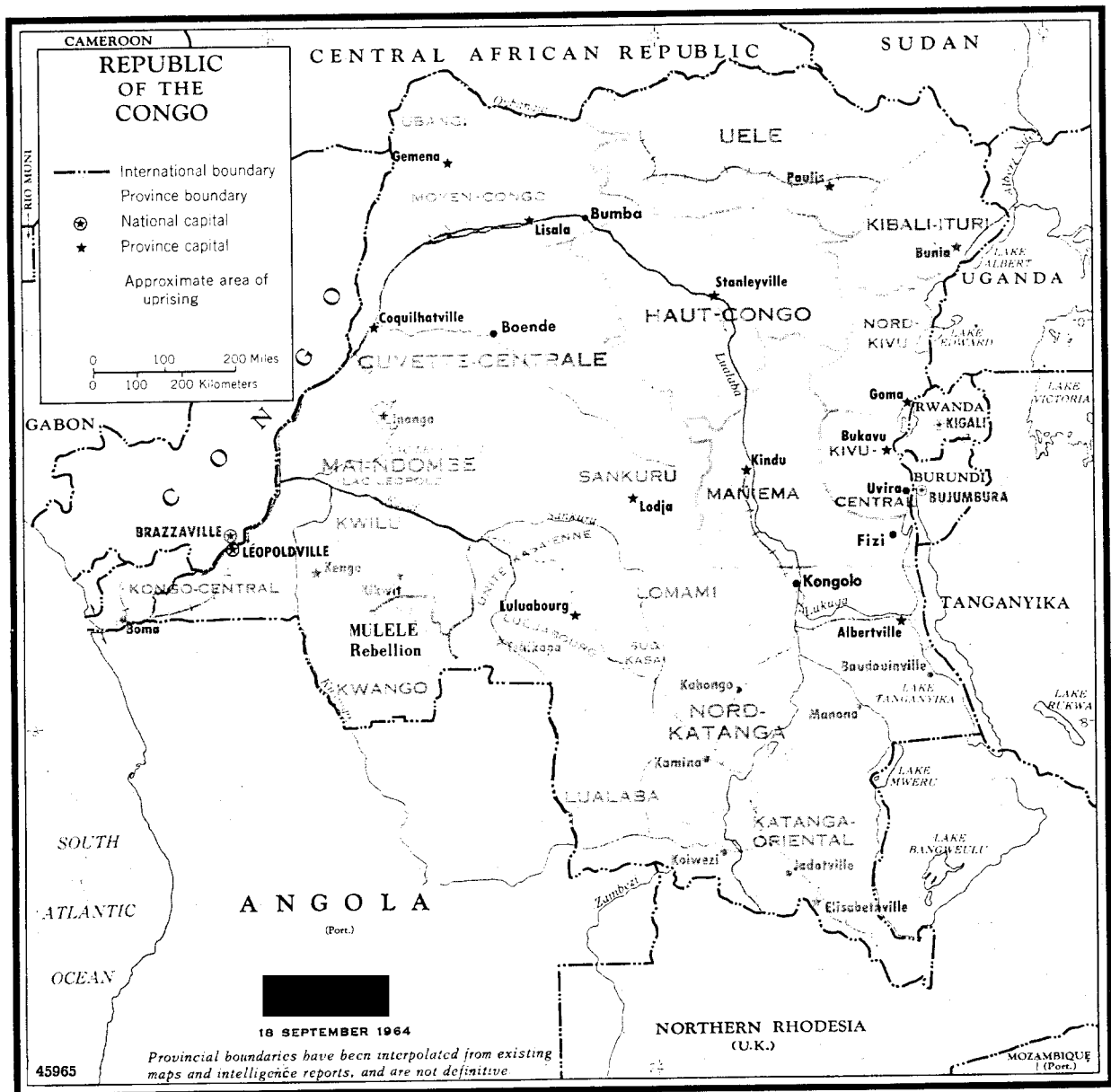
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Asia-Africa

CONGO GOVERNMENT MAKES FURTHER GAINS

With the military situation in the Congo considerably improved, Premier Tshombé is moving to extend the diplomatic gains scored at last week's Organization of African Unity foreign ministers' meeting.

Government forces have recaptured several important towns from the rebels. Lisala, a provincial capital 300 miles below the rebel center of Stanleyville, fell early this week, as did Boende east of Coquilhatville. In the central Congo, another provincial capital, Lodja, is under heavy government pressure. Rebels reportedly are fleeing the rail town of Kongolo as Tshombé's men move northward toward Kindu.

Near Lake Tanganyika, government forces advancing toward Fizi have stopped to reorganize. Farther north, troops holding Bukavu are reported to be expecting a new rebel attack, although air strikes by T-28s probably have kept the military balance in their favor.

Tshombé goes this weekend to Nairobi for the first meeting

of the OAU's newly established Congo conciliation commission. According to several sources the commission will first focus on Leopoldville's strained relations with two of its neighbors, Burundi and the Brazzaville Congo. The commission chairman, Kenya's Prime Minister Kenyatta, reportedly favors working out a formula for improving the relations before visiting the three capitals, as called for by the OAU.

Kenyatta also seems likely to use his influence to limit involvement in Congolese internal affairs. With his aid, and that of moderates on the commission, Tshombé probably will be able to withstand immediate radical pressures to hold early round-table talks with all "Congolese factions." Continuing rebel dissension prevents the radical states from selecting and backing any effective opponent to Tshombé. If the government continues its current military successes the insurgents will soon lose all claims to legitimacy based upon effective control of large sections of the Congo.

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